THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b) The US authorities have requested withdrawal of two Indian diplomats stationed in the United States, for activities allegedly incompatible with their consular status. This followed the Indian Government's decision asking for withdrawal of concerned US diplomats based in New Delhi following reports of their unauthorized contacts with a Home Ministry official.

(c) and (d) Government have deeply regretted this decision of the US authorities. The Indian diplomats concerned were discharging their normal responsibilities as consular officers. Government have categorically rejected any implication to the contrary.

(e) Does not arise.

Indo-Pak Relations

2338. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal to improve Indo-Pak relations;

(b) whether some countries have offered their services to medicate between both the countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Government are committed to establishing a relationship of trust, friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. To this end, Government are willing to have wide ranging and comprehensive talks, at appropriate level, with Pakistan on all issues of mutual concern.

(b) to (d) Government are aware that some countries have offered to facilitate dialogue between India and Pakistan, if both the countries so desire. It is, however, India's consistent policy that all issues between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally within the framework of the Simla Agreement. Government's consistent to the principle of bilateralism in relationship with Pakistan rules out any third party intervention.

Pre-Matric Scholarships

2339. SHRI K. PRADHANI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have made any evaluation on the implementation of centrally sponsored scheme to provide pre-matric scholarships for the children of those engaged in uncleaned occupation;

(b) if so, the details of the deficiencies found in the implementation of the above scheme; and

(c) the remedial measures proposed by the Government to remove these bottlenecks and improve the effectiveness of the said scheme?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) and (b) Research studies by independent research agencies on sample basis have been conducted in selected areas of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar on implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-matric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in unclean occupations during Eight Five Year Plan period. The studies while covering functional aspects have recommended removal of certain deficiencies like removal of income ceiling as most of families engaged in unclean occupations have low income; timely disbursement of full scholarship; publicity of the Scheme to bring awareness in the community and activating the operational level of the directorate at the State level to reach out the community directly and if, necessary, restructure its organisation to be more effective and efficient.

(c) The income ceiling under the scheme has been totally removed with effect from 25.2.1994. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been requested to take appropriate steps to ensure timely payment of scholarship to eligible students. It has also been emphasised that since the scheme is an important supportive instrument towards elimination of scavenging to which highest priority has been given, therefore, they are requested to ensure effective implementation of the scheme. The regulations governing the scheme also suggest that the State Governments/Union Territories to timely announce the scheme by giving advertisement in the leading language newspapers, local dailies and by using other suitable publicity media.

[Translation]

Foreign Tour for Treatment

2340. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Union Ministers, former Ministers, Members of Parliament, Governors and Ministers of the State Governments who undertook foreign tours for treatment of various diseases during the last year;

(b) whether funds were released from the exchequer for such treatments;

(c) if so, the amount of funds released; and

(d) whether the facility of treatment of such diseases is not available in the country for which the foreign tours were undertaken?